A JOURNAL OF THE SOCIETY FOR MUSIC THEORY

MTO 23.2 Examples: Spicer, Fragile, Emergent, and Absent Tonics in Pop and Rock Songs

(Note: audio, video, and other interactive examples are only available online)
http://www.mtosmt.org/issues/mto.17.23.2/mto.17.23.2.spicer.php

Example 1. Daryl Hall and John Oates, "She's Gone" (1973)

Everybody's high on consolation
Everybody's trying to tell me what is right for me
My daddy tried to bore me with a sermon
But it's plain to see that they can't comfort me

Sorry Charlie for the imposition
I think I've got it, I've got the strength to carry on
I need a drink and a quick decision
Now it's up to me, ooh what will be

[CHORUS]
She's gone, Oh I, Oh I
I'd better learn how to face it
She's gone, Oh I, Oh I
I'd pay the devil to replace her
She's gone, Oh I, what went wrong?

Get up in the morning look in the mirror
I'm worn as her toothbrush hanging in the stand
My face ain't looking any younger
Now I can see love's taken her toll on me

[CHORUS]

[SAX SOLO]

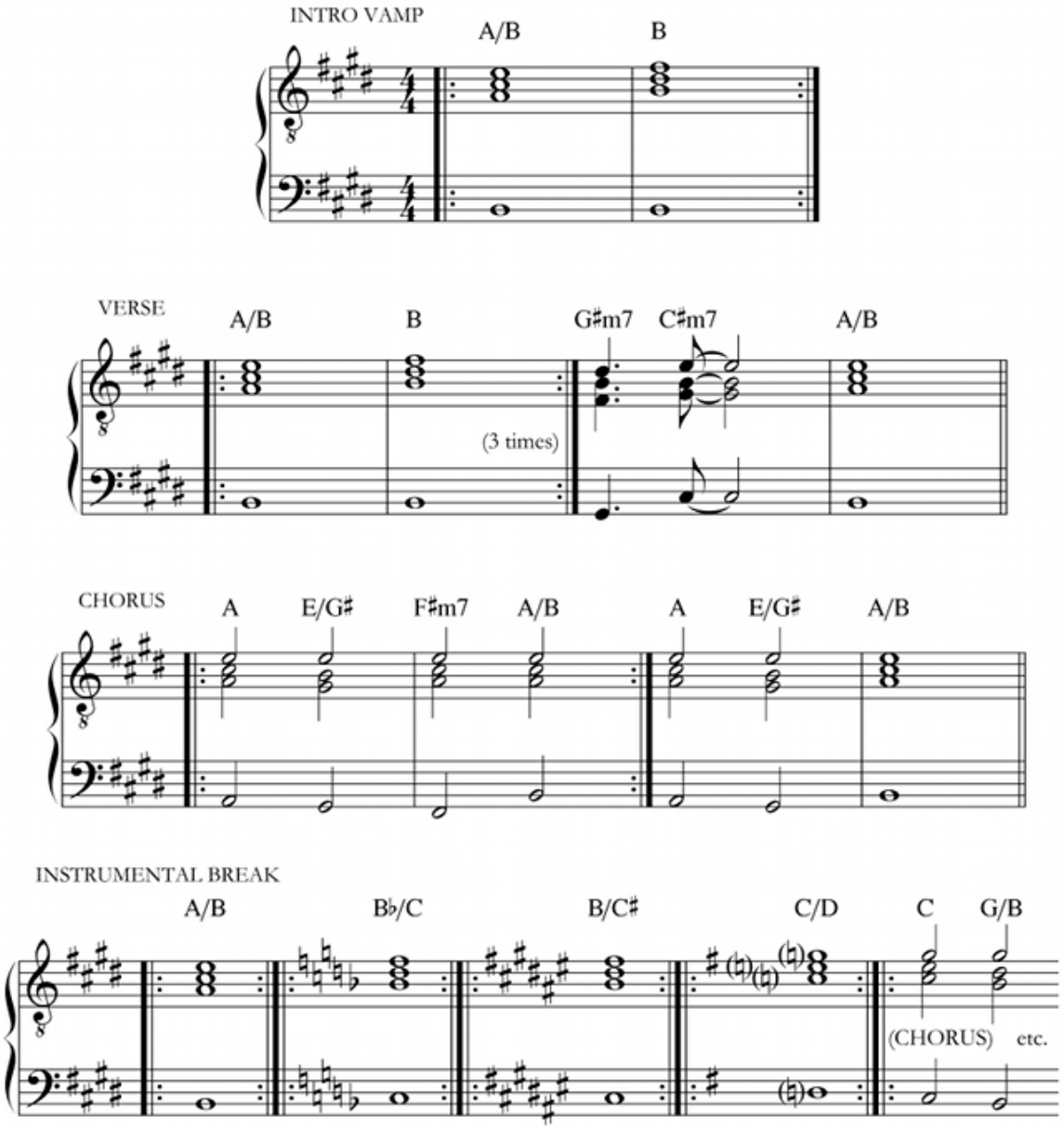
Think I'll spend eternity in the city
Let the carbon and monoxide choke my thoughts away
And pretty bodies help dissolve the memories
But they can never be what she was to me

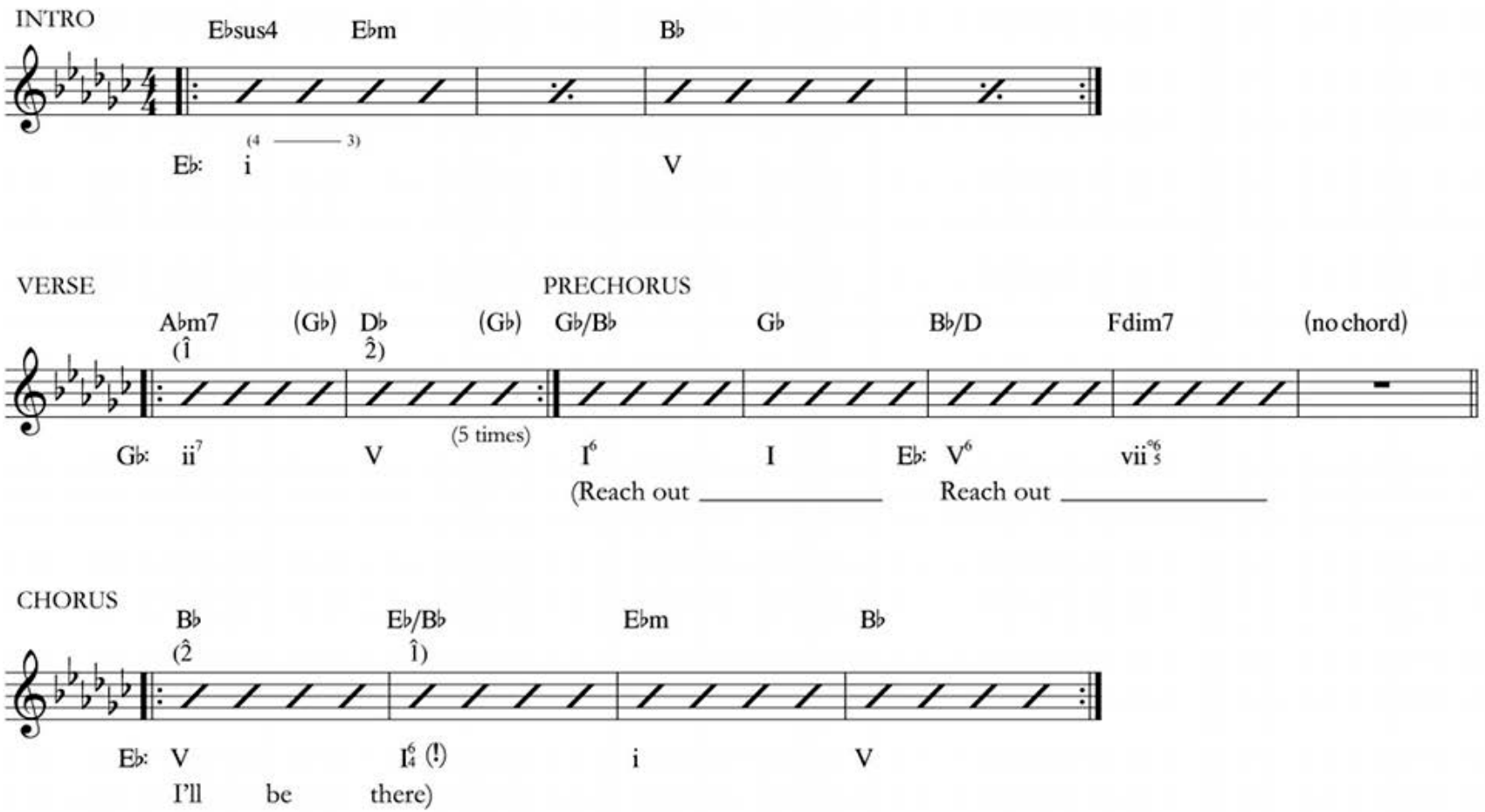
[CHORUS]

[INSTRUMENTAL BREAK]

[EXTENDED CHORUS]

[FADE]

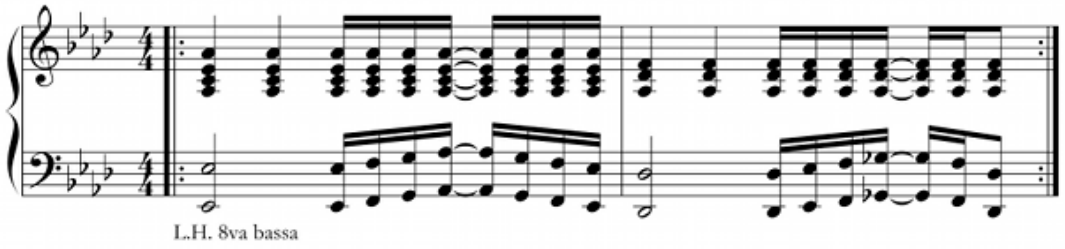




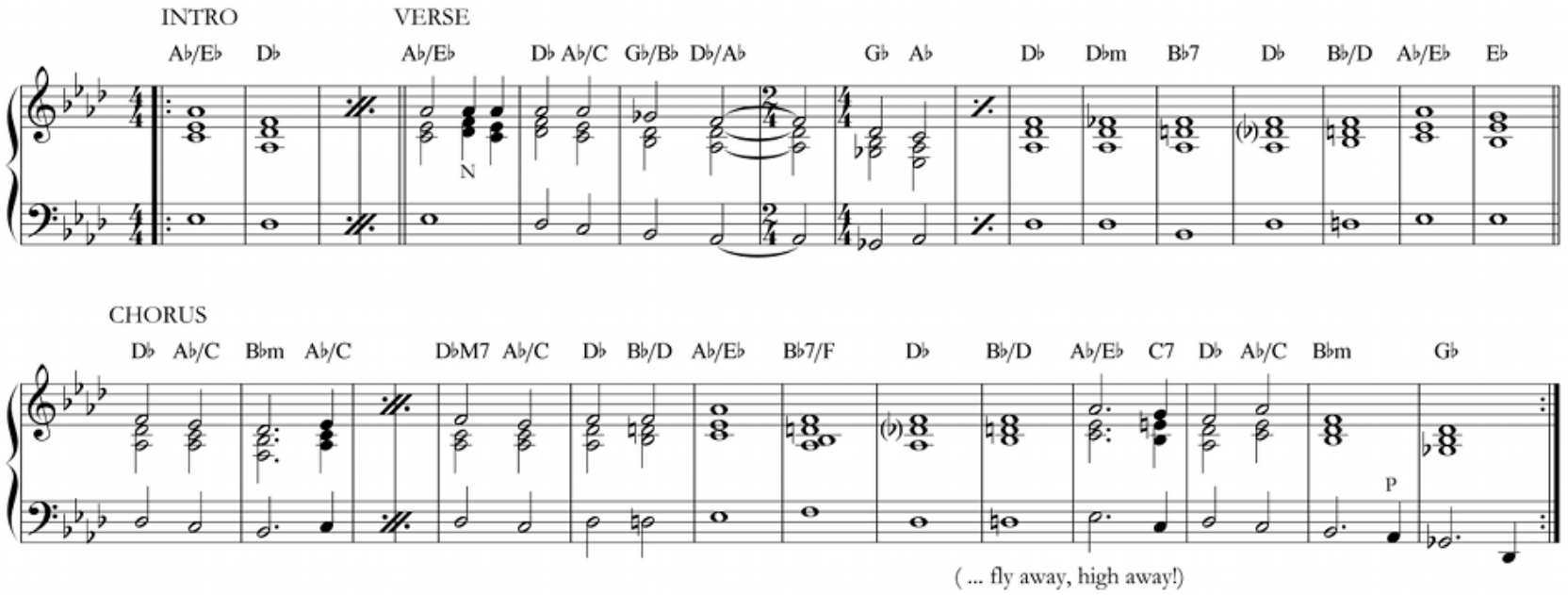
Example 2. The Four Tops, "Reach Out I'll Be There" (1966)

Example 3. Elton John, "Someone Saved My Life Tonight" (1975)

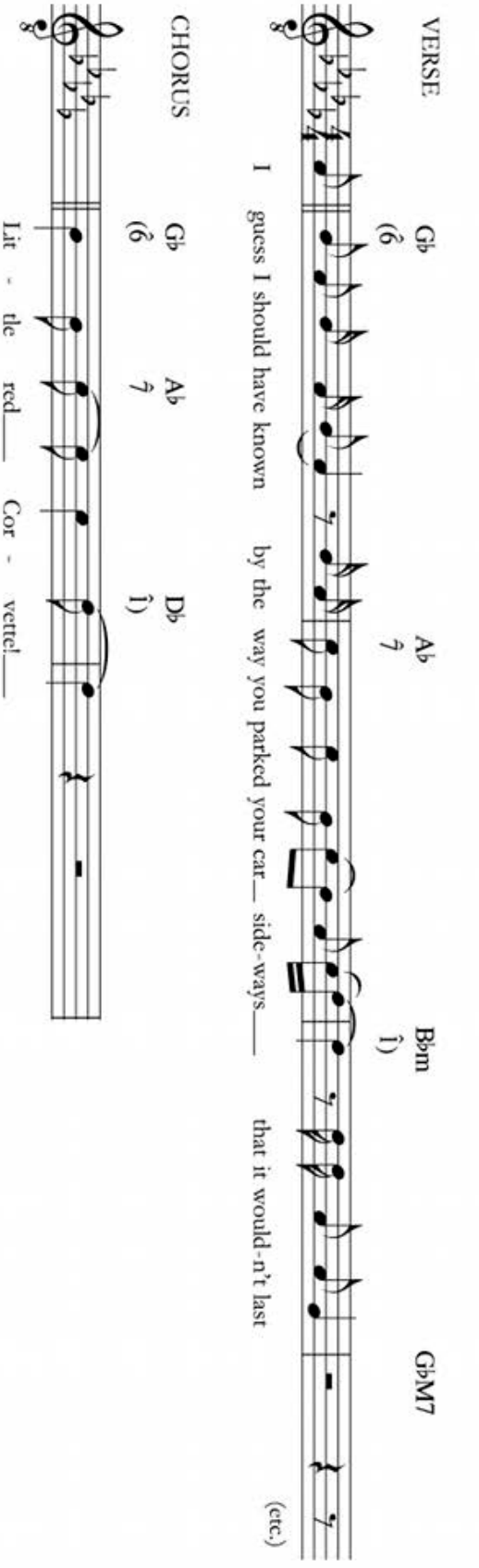
a) Signature introductory piano riff



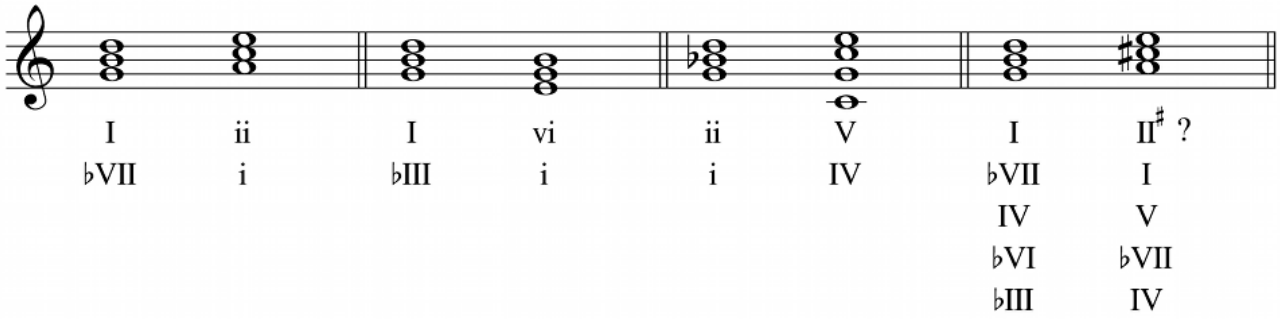
b) Harmonic reduction



Example 4. Prince, “Little Red Corvette” (1982)

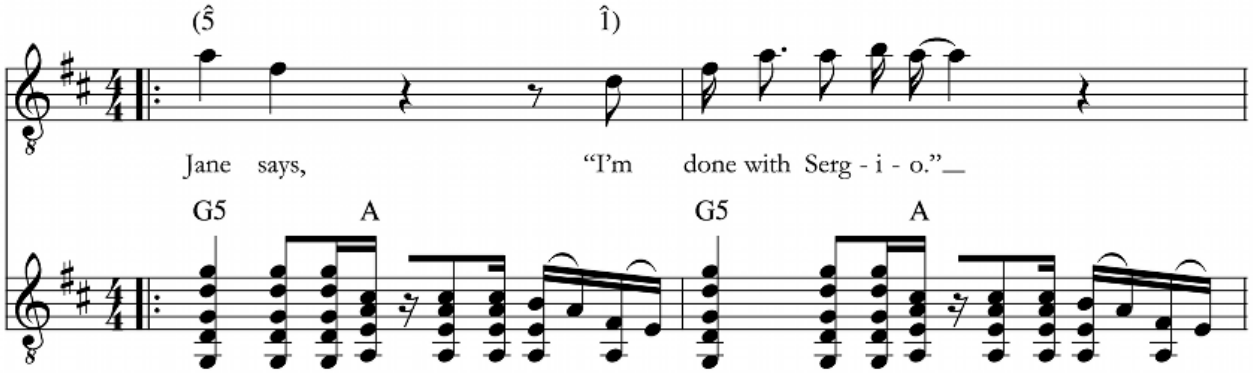


Example 5. Possible harmonic-functional interpretations of some oscillating two-chord vamps

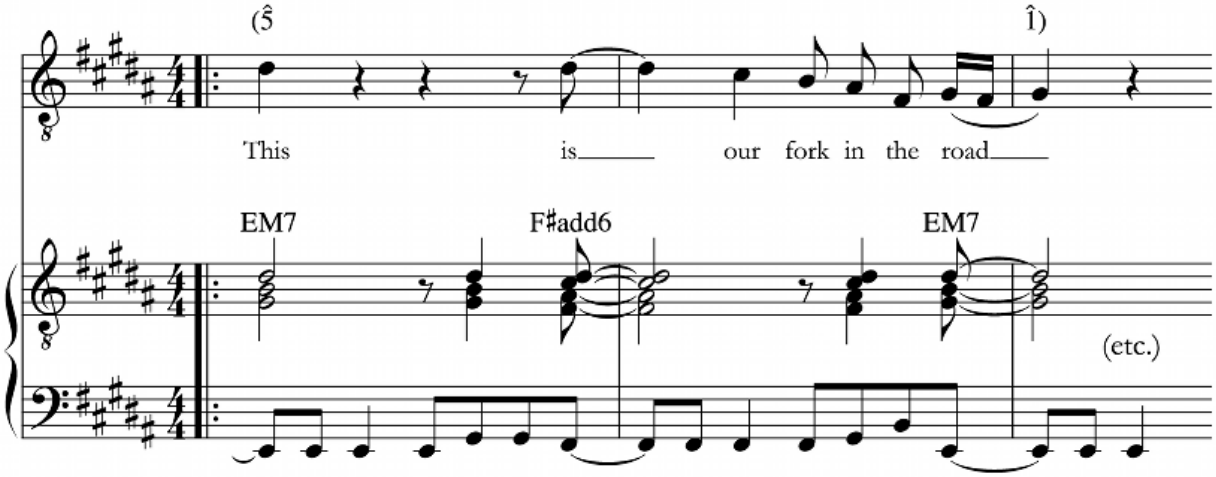


Example 6. Two songs built on a shuttle of two major chords with roots lying a whole step apart

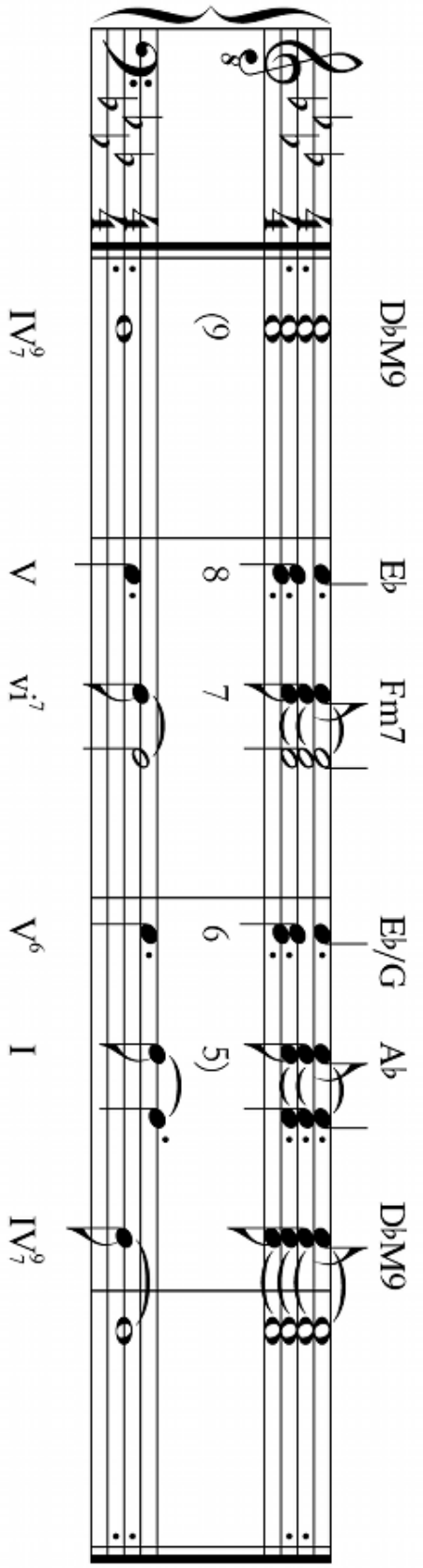
a) Jane's Addiction, "Jane Says" (1988)



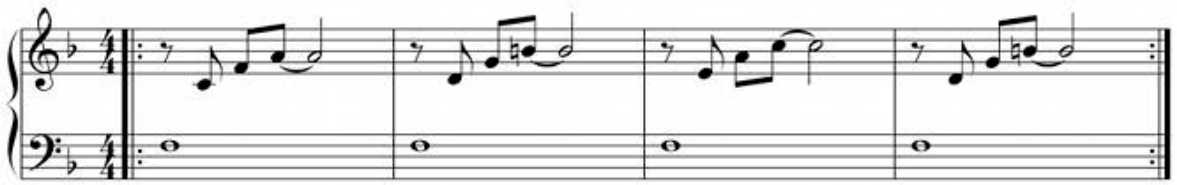
b) The [Detroit] Spinners, "I'll Be Around" (1972)



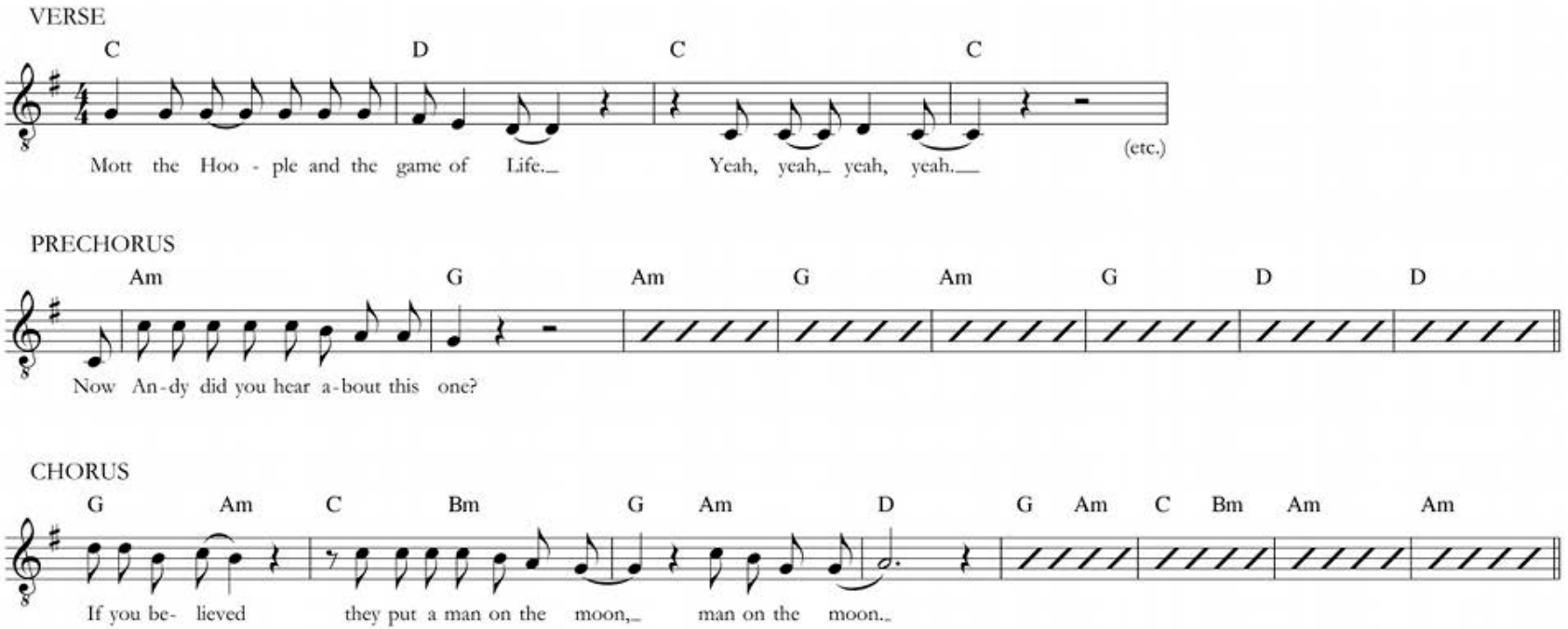
Example 7. The Human League, “Human” (1986), main progression (the “Sisyphus effect”)



a) Fleetwood Mac, "Sara" (1979)

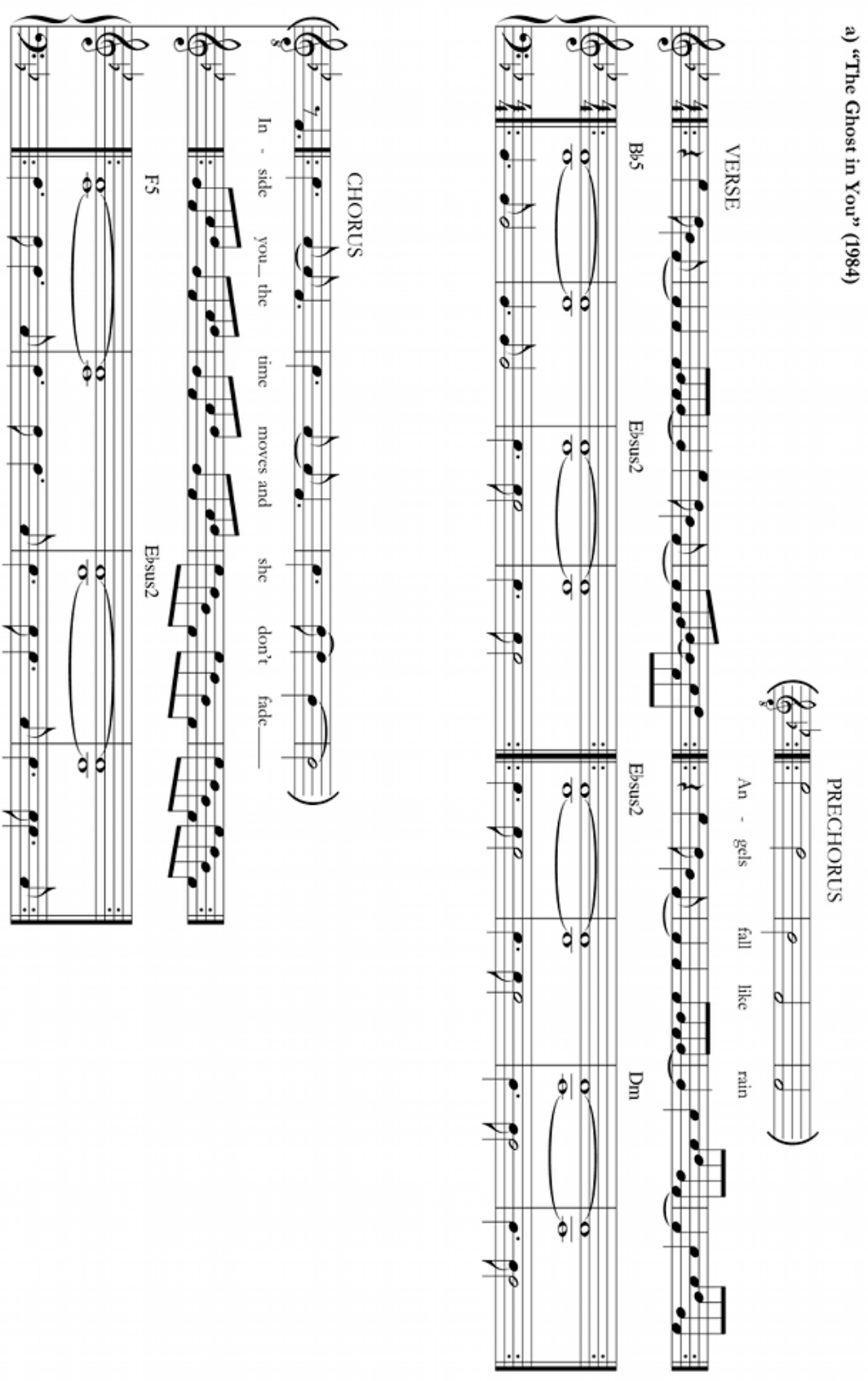


b) R.E.M., "Man on the Moon" (1992)



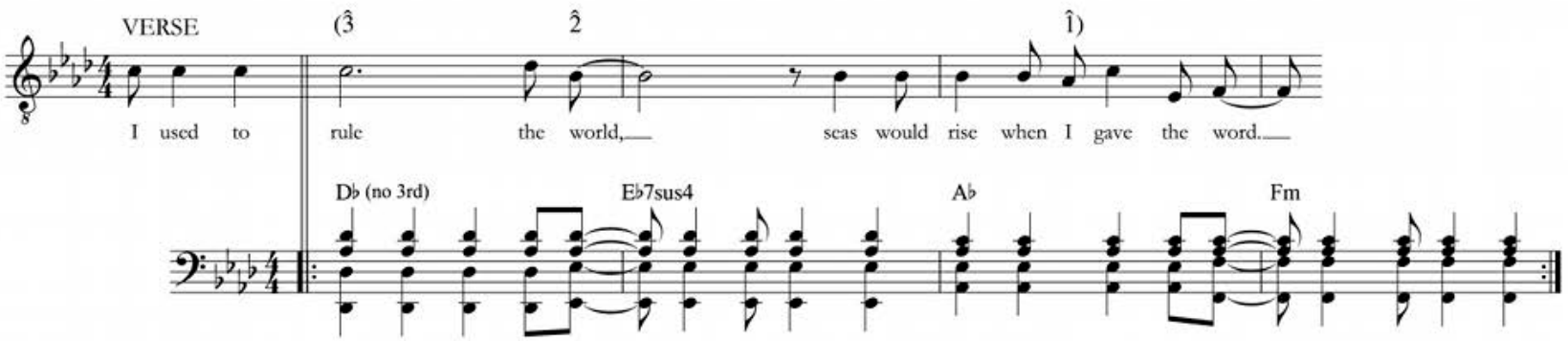
Example 8. Two songs with potentially viable Lydian openings

Example 9. Two songs by the Psychedelic Furs

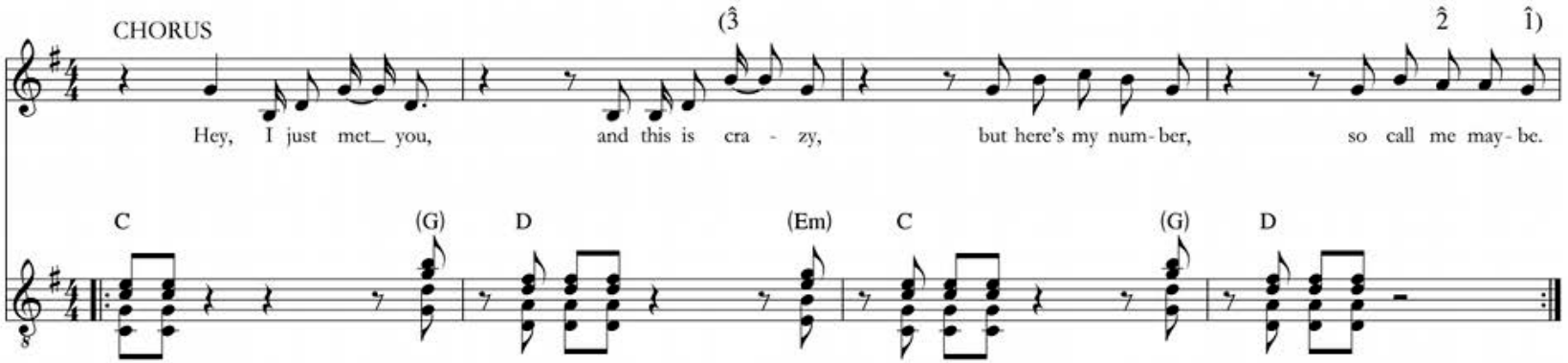


b) "Love My Way" (1982)

a) Coldplay, "Viva la Vida" (2008)

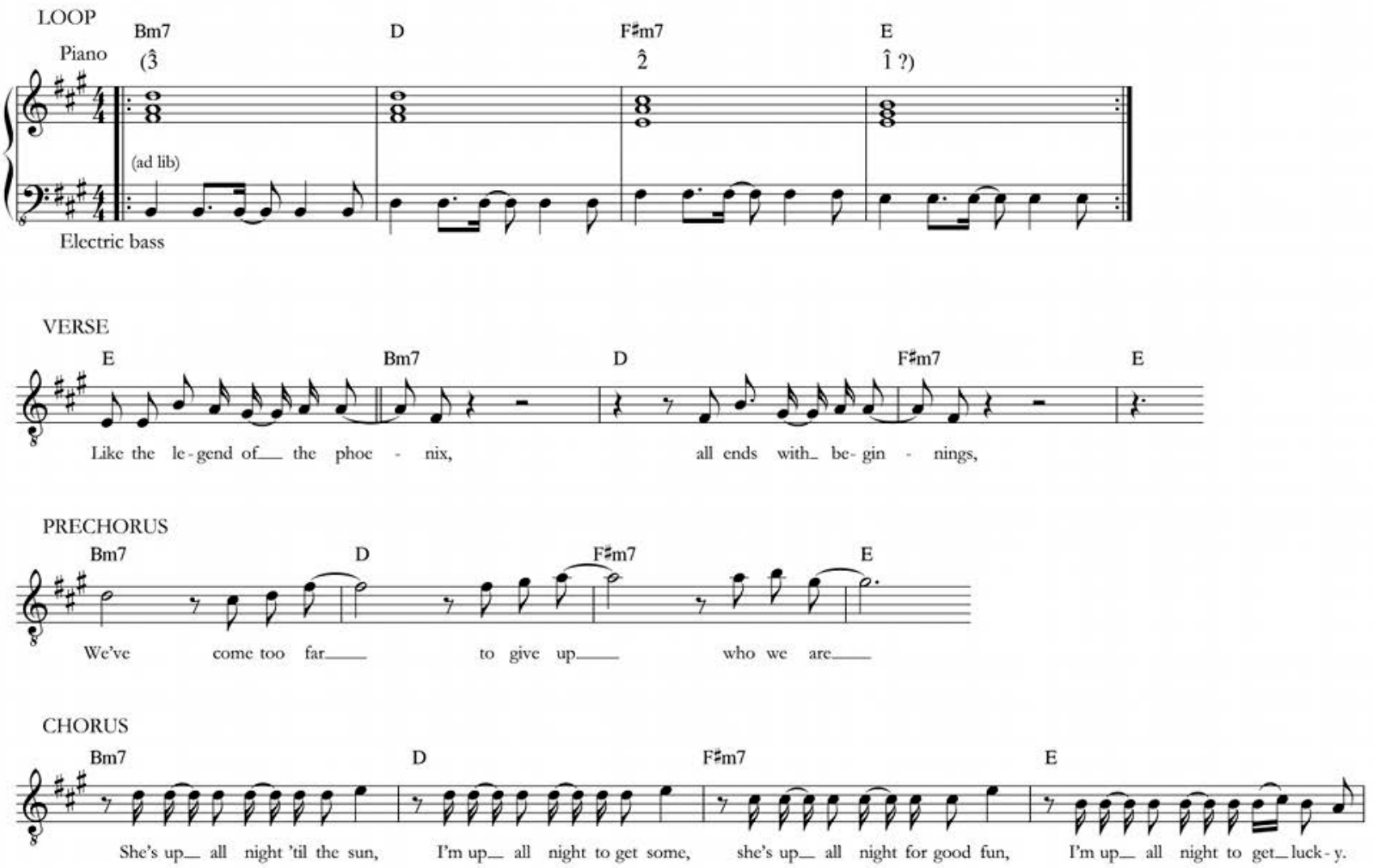


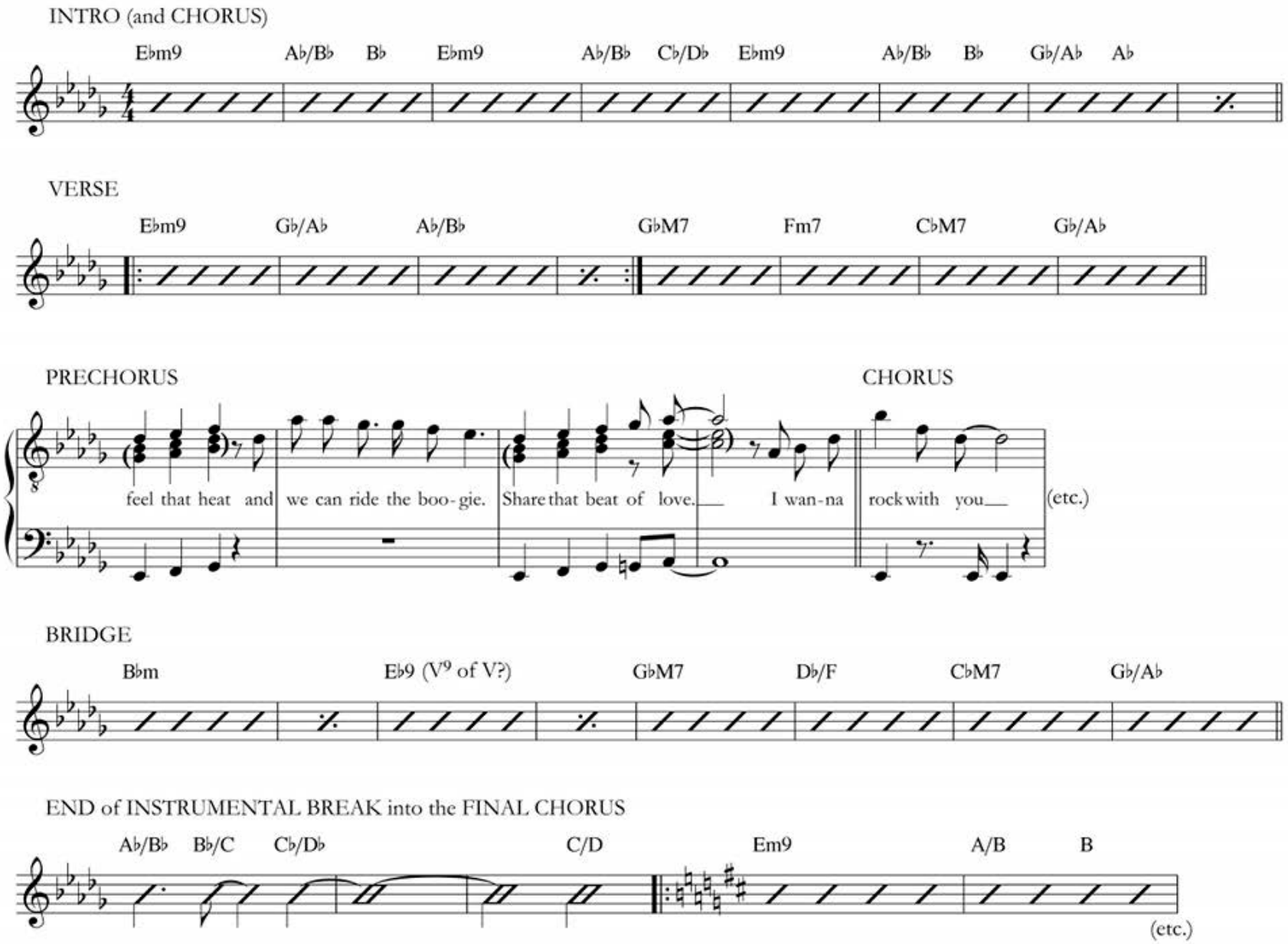
b) Carly Rae Jepsen, "Call Me Maybe" (2012)

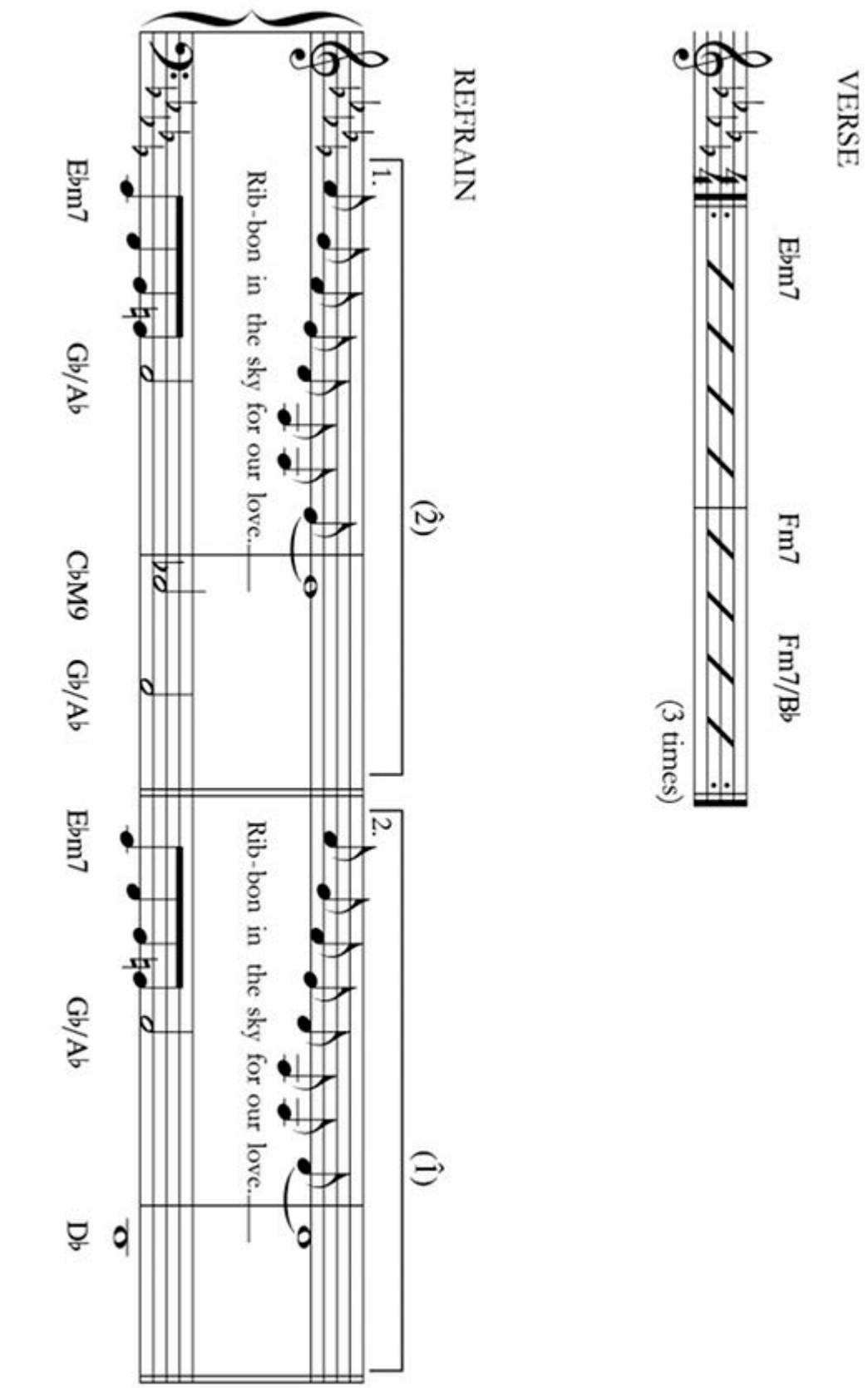


Example 10. Three recent #1 hits built on a repeating four-bar groove

c) Daft Punk, "Get Lucky" (2013)





Example 11. Michael Jackson, "Rock With You" (1979)

Example 12. Stevie Wonder, “Ribbon in the Sky” (1982)